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ABSTRACT

A study investigated graduate student teachers' socialization experiences in order to determine how these experiences affected feelings of identification with their academic departments. Subjects, 29 graduate student teachers at a medium-sized West Coast university, were interviewed. Findings revealed that graduate student teachers were able to identify and describe salient experiences ("turning points") signaling and intensifying identification with their departments and with their roles as fledgling academicians. One hundred seventy-two turning points were identified, falling into three broad categories: turning points triggered by changes in an individual's intellectual self-evaluation; turning points associated with salient encounters with students, peers and superiors; and turning points associated with changes in organizational structure and climate. Findings suggest that it would be fruitful to consider from graduate students' perspectives events affecting their socialization and identification with departments. (Three appendixes provide the interview protocol, the graph on which levels of identification were plotted, and an outline of the turning points category system. A list of 59 references is attached.) (RAE)

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Turning Points Affecting the Socialization of Graduate Student Teachers

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RUNNING HEAD: Socialization

This competitively selected paper was presented during the annual meeting of the Western Speech Communication Association, Communication and Instruction Interest Group, Spokane, 19 February 1989. Coauthor: Deborah Kirk.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate graduate student teachers' socialization experiences and to determine how these experiences affect feelings of identification with their academic departments. The findings revealed that graduate student teachers are able to identify and describe salient experiences ("turning points") signalling and intensifying identification with their departments and with their roles as fledging academicians. One hundred seventy-two turning points were identified, falling into three broad categories: turning points triggered by changes in one's intellectual self-evaluation; turning points associated with salient encounters with students, peers and superiors; turning points associated with changes in organizational structure and climate. This paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of these turning points for facilitating constructive and appropriate socialization of graduate students.

Turning Points Affecting the Socialization of Graduate Students

Because the caliber of our faculty is so important to the health of academe, we must monitor carefully the quality of professors entering and continuing in the profession. Unfortunately, higher education faces major recruiting problems in the years ahead. Bowen and Schuster (1986) report that fewer post-baccalaureates are pursuing careers in academe and that 40% of the current faculty will retire by 1995, with the balance retiring no later than 2010. Unless a strong and plentiful pool of faculty applicants becomes available, universities may be forced to employ individuals not fully qualified. A few universities may even lose their accreditation as a result of having too few qualified personnel (Erekson & Lundy, 1986). At the very least, a shortage of doctoral-level faculty will certainly have a negative impact on research and development activities. For these reasons, the academy must consider ways of encouraging qualified and interested post-baccalaureates to pursue academic careers.

One logical solution is to encourage well qualified masters level students to continue with their graduate studies, obtain Ph.D.s, and pursue careers in academe. As an initial step in considering how to strengthen graduate students' commitment to academe, one might want to study how graduate students are socialized while pursuing masters degrees. Since socialization experiences allow graduate students to develop the competence necessary to cope with their roles (Rouse, 1984; Corcoran & Clark, 1984; Weiss, 1981; Gottleib, 1961), one can presume that these experiences may

influence the graduate student's initial attraction to--or disaffection with--academe as a potential career.

Recently three researchers have studied and made contributions to our understanding of graduate student socialization processes. Darling's (1987) research on graduate student teacher socialization focuses on interactions among graduate students with their peers and faculty. She argues that these communication encounters provide the primary vehicle through which graduate students are able to socialize into their roles and department. Interestingly, her study revealed that graduate students use at least two different types of socialization strategies: passive strategies when interacting with faculty and experienced graduate students, but interactive strategies with peers.

Bullis and Bach (1987) further clarified the nature of these strategies. They developed a typology of 15 different "turning point" types positively or negatively affecting the beginning instructor's socialization and identification (sense of belonging) with their department. Borrowing from Bullis and Baxter's (1986) earlier work, Bullis and Bach (1987) operationalized a turning point as any occurrence perceived as signalling and accentuating relationship change.

Bullis and Bach's (1987) principal findings were that informal recognition (e.g., receiving a compliment from a peer or faculty member) was associated with significant and positive identification, while even slight rejection (e.g., a comment that one's presentation was too long) was associated with reduced identification. They also found that mere

frequency of socialization was positively associated with positive identification with one's department.

Inasmuch as Bullis and Bach's findings hold much promise for suggesting ways in which graduate students' socialization can be made more positive--for themselves, their institutions, and the students they serve--it is a line of research that needs to be furthered. Accordingly, this study's objectives were to identify and categorize turning points perceived by graduate students as most significantly affecting their socialization and identification with their departments. Additionally, this investigation attempted to discover the turning point types affecting graduate student commitment to advanced graduate studies. Specifically, this study addressed the following research questions:

Research Question 1: From the perspective of the beginning graduate student teacher, what phenomena comprise important socialization and identification turning points?

Research question 2: What turning point types, if any, are associated with commitment to future graduate studies?

Methods

Participants

Data were collected from 29 graduate student teachers at a medium-sized West Coast university. The participants taught in nine different departments: Biology, Geology, English, Communication, Computer Science, Mechanical Engineering, Management Information Systems, Finance and Marketing, and Accounting. Interviewees were selected on the basis of two

criteria: not having completed more than four semesters of graduate work; not having taught more than four semesters. Thus, only "organizational newcomers" were interviewed for this study. Stohl (1986) has found that that newcomers are better able to recall significant socialization experiences than are persons already socialized in the organization.

Sixteen participants (55% of total) were male, and thirteen (45% of total) were female. Twenty-four participants (83% of total) were American students, while five participants (17% of total) were foreign students. The age of the sample ranged from 22 to 49.

Instrumentation

Two devices were employed: an audio tape recorder and the Turning Point Graph. The graph (Appendix A) helped graduate students to reconstruct experiences in an orderly way and to visually indicate how these experiences changed feelings of identification.

The ordinate axis on the graph depicted a rating scale of identification with the department ranging from 0 (minimal) to 10 (maximum) identification. The abscissa axis represented the timeline from the participant's initial role acceptance as a graduate student to the moment of the interview. The timeline was divided into monthly intervals beginning with the month of August and proceeding chronologically until May. (Modifications were made on the timeline for participants beginning graduate work in the spring.)

Procedure

A specific protocol was followed for each interview (Appendix B). The researcher/interviewer began the interview by thanking the participants for agreeing to the interview. The researcher assured the participants that all information exchanged during the interview would be confidential and that in no way would their names be identified. Participants were then asked for permission to tape record their interviews.

The researcher explained the purpose of the study and described how the turning point graph was to be used. Once the graph's abscissa and ordinate axes were made clear, participants were asked to mark and explain their present level of identification with their department, meaning their level of identification at the time of the interview. After the individual's present relationship with the department was discussed and plotted on the graph, the participants were asked to recall and explain their initial level of identification with the department, meaning the first time they thought about being in graduate student/teaching roles. The participants' explanation and plotting of initial and subsequent feelings of identification provided the basis for determining changes in identification occurring between any two given points in time.

After participants explained their initial level of identification, they were then asked to recall the next event which either strengthened or weakened identification with their department. After the participants introduced and thoroughly discussed their event, the participants were then asked to mark on the graph the point in time when the change occurred.

As each new event was introduced, the participants were asked to describe as fully as possible the experience and their feelings about the event. If a participant's description was unclear, the interviewer probed with neutral questions to elicit more detailed information. In addition, the researcher asked how the event(s) brought about changes in identification. For example, if a participant rated an event as a "5" on the identification scale, and the previous event was rated as a "7," the participant was asked to explain the reasons for the change in identification. This procedure was repeated throughout the entire interview resulting in a chronological ordering and record of significant turning point events as perceived by the participant. The interviews ranged in duration from 25 to 90 minutes. All interviews were conducted by the first author.

Data Analysis

The tape-recorded interviews identifying the turning point events were transcribed onto 5 x 8 cards and double checked for accuracy. Recorded on the back of the cards was information taken directly from the respondent's graph. This information included: (1) the participant's code (e.g., Subject #11); (2) the chronological order of turning points (e.g., a participant's second turning point would be recorded as TP #2); (3) the specific location of the experience on the graph (e.g., "3" on a scale of 10); and (4) the magnitude of positive or negative change in identification (e.g., Change +2).

To interpret the interview data, a category system was developed (Appendix C). Two coders were trained to use the category system. In following this procedure, interrater reliability was achieved in excess of .90. The data were then discussed in terms of turning point events associated with positive and negative socialization and identification.

Results

One hundred seventy-two turning point experiences were identified and discussed by the 29 graduate student teachers as influencing identification with their departments. Ten events were eliminated from the study because they either did not fit into the category scheme or did not have enough information to be categorized. The remaining turning points were classified into three major categories: Intellectual Identity, Socio-Emotional Identity, and Occupational Identity.

Category I: Intellectual Identity

A total of 73 turning point events were reported by participants as either enhancing or threatening their intellectual identity. This major category is divided into two subcategories: (1) Intellectual Competence, and (2) Intellectual Compatibility.

Subcategory A: Intellectual Competence

These turning point events signal to the graduate student his or her intellectual competence or incompetence. A total of 62 events were reported in this subcategory. These events predominantly fall into three areas of evaluation. The first area is the individual's evaluation of self as a teacher. The second area is the individual's evaluation of self as a

student. The final area is the individual's evaluation of self in relationship with superordinates. The turning point events in this last area consist of either confirming or disconfirming communication interactions with superordinates signalling to the graduate student his or her intellectual competence.

Sub-subcategory 1: Individual's evaluation of self as a teacher. A total of 16 turning points were reported in this area. Thirteen events were reported as signalling competence with one's ability as a teacher, while only three events were reported as signalling incompetence with one's ability as a teacher. When a student demonstrated to the beginning teacher that "learning" had (actually) taken place (e.g., applying theoretical concepts to class discussion) the beginning teacher felt a sense of success with his or her students. However, when students did not participate in classroom discussion, or performed poorly on assignments, several interviewees questioned their qualifications and abilities as instructors.

Another difficult obstacle to overcome is the graduate student teacher's proximate age with their students. One graduate student reported that a student asked him on the first day of class, in a condescending tone, "Are you really our teacher?" This episode weakened the beginning teacher's feelings of identification because he already felt uneasy about his teaching abilities and credibility.

Sub-subcategory 2: Individual's evaluation of self as a student. A total of 26 turning points involving academic performance were reported in this area. Twenty-one were reported as signalling competence with one's

scholarly ability as a student, while only five were reported as signalling incompetence with one's ability as a student.

As the graduate student successfully completed major assignments, passed qualifying exams, or received good grades, his or her level of confidence increased and reinforced the "I-can-do-this! (succeed in graduate school)" feeling. Other significant events reported as signalling to the graduate student his or her intellectual competence were receiving fellowships, awards, or placement in a Ph.D. program at another university. In addition, being awarded financial assistance for a special department project or having an opportunity to make presentations at conferences was considered, from the student's perspective, to be an honor and representative of the individual's intellectual competence.

Five events were reported by graduate students as indicating intellectual incompetence. When projects or academic efforts did not meet the graduate student's expectations, (i.e., performing poorly on papers, exams, or receiving low grades) feelings of identification with the department decreased. Interviewees confessed to "feeling stupid" when they did not understand material covered in their courses.

Sub-subcategory 3: Individual's evaluation of self with superordinates. A total of 21 turning points were reported in this area. Nineteen of these events concerned superordinates giving confirming feedback to the graduate students. Two turning points concerned a superordinate giving disconfirming feedback.

Most of the confirming communication events consisted of a superordinate giving advice to the graduate student about coursework, projects, or research possibilities. Other events signalling to the graduate student that he or she met sufficiently the superordinate's intellectual standards occurred when the superior indicated to the student that he or she was "Ph.D. material," and/or would like the student to enroll in the professor's course. Positive teaching evaluations, being asked to proctor an exam, and receiving letters or recommendation from superiors were also considered assurances of intellectual competence.

Only two events were classified as disconfirming. In one event, the graduate student received a grade lower than expected for the work performed in class. In the other event, a superordinate indicated to the graduate student that she was not able to handle a beginning teaching position because of her young age and strongly suggested that she wait another semester before applying again. In both cases, the graduate students felt inadequate, angry, and identification with their departments decreased.

Subcategory B: Intellectual Compatibility

These turning point events signal to the graduate student that his or her own research agenda and/or intellectual objectives are or are not compatible with those of the department. Of the total 10 turning point events reported in this subcategory, two were identified as strengthening identification, while eight events were reported as weakening identification.

Two events were reported as signalling to the graduate student that the department's intellectual objectives were compatible with his or her own. One student indicated a strong desire to adopt the same teaching style as her professor in the department. Another graduate student reported feeling inspired and intellectually stimulated by her professor.

Eight turning points were reported as events signalling incompatibility between one's own and the department's intellectual objectives. These events usually motivated an individual to consider taking classes from other departments or leaving the university to pursue studies at a different academic institution.

In summary, 73 turning point events (42% of the total) were assigned to the Intellectual Identity category.

Category II: Socio-emotional Identity

A total of 38 events were reported as turning points enhancing or threatening a graduate student's socio-emotional identity. These events signal acceptance, belonging and emotional support between and among peers and superordinates and are divided into two subcategories: (1) Dyadic Interaction with Peer or Superordinate, (2) Small Group Interaction.

Subcategory A: Dyadic Interaction with Peer or superordinates

These events signal the presence or absence of support, camaraderie, or acceptance, and seventeen turning points were assigned to this subcategory. The most frequently reported dyadic interaction between peers involved the receipt of needed information about one's graduate program. The students considered these events significant because prior to the

interaction very little information was available about how to conduct the assignments and the day-to-day paperwork expected of graduate students. Peers would also give advice about grading procedures and how to cope with problem students.

Only one interaction was reported signalling an absence of support or acceptance. In this instance the graduate student recounted that her study partner stopped interacting with her, on both a personal and intellectual level. This graduate student reported feeling of isolated and lessened identification with the department.

Only one turning point with a superordinate was classified as supportive and strengthening identification, while three events were classified as signalling an absence of support and weakening identification. The supportive turning point occurred when a faculty member said to a graduate student, "You belong; you just don't know you belong." Regarding the nonsupportive turning points, one graduate student reported that her professor "reluctantly" agreed to write a letter of recommendation. Another reported that the department chair (with whom she felt "bonded" with prior to this interaction) acknowledged her decision to pursue academic interests at another university but "brushed it off" and changed the topic of conversation. Yet another graduate student reported feeling isolated when his major advisor took a job at another university.

Subcategory B: Small Group Interaction

These turning points were interactions with more than two peers or superordinates signalling a presence or absence of acceptance or

belonging. A total of 21 events were reported in this subcategory. These interactions were further classified into three sub-subcategories (1) Socializing--Academic Type; (2) Socializing--Non-Academic Type; and (3) Disassociation

Sub-subcategory 1: Socializing--Academic Type. Seven turning points were reported as meeting with colleagues for academic purposes. Graduate students met specifically with associates to coordinate efforts in deciding the department's common essay, common exams, or common lab assignments. Events also included in this area were meetings with thesis committee members, or meetings with members of an academic club. All of these events were reported as strengthening identification.

Sub-subcategory 2: Socializing--Non-Academic Type. Eight turning points were reported as meeting with colleagues for non-academic purposes. Joining and interacting with a social club, partying with other graduate students and professors, and participating in departmental sporting activities (i.e., a softball game or golf tournament) were turning point events reported as enhancing interpersonal relationships and strengthening identification with the department.

Sub-subcategory 3: Disassociation. The final area in this subcategory consists of turning point events signalling anti-socialization. Graduate students either felt separated from or chose to sever connections with peers or professors because of differing academic interests, or in response to socially unacceptable behavior. One graduate student reported a "passive disassociation" by simply withdrawing from

peers working on theses much different from his. Other turning points were characterized as "active disassociation." Another graduate student "severed ties" with several other graduate students whom she discovered gossiping in a "vicious" manner about other graduate students.

Another graduate student described a troubling interaction with a professor at his home where a faculty party was being held. The professor was attempting to persuade the graduate student to interact more with his proteges because she "certainly could," and "certainly should." The graduate student felt "cornered" and resentful.

Category III: Occupational Identity

A total of 50 turning points were recounted by participants as enhancing or threatening one's occupational identity. These events are related to organizational structure and climate and are separated into two subcategories: (1) Status Classification, (2) Structural Support and Cooperation.

Subcategory A: Status Classification

These turning point events signal either positive or negative status classification. Of the seven events reported, the graduate students discussed an awareness of "place" or position in the department. Three reports were positive, four were negative.

Of the events signalling an affirmation of positive status classification, one graduate student recalled being invited as a "member" of the department to attend a Christmas party. Although one might not perceive the invitation to be a "big deal," the student indicated that

everybody received the announcement and he felt like "it was one time when it wasn't explicitly stated that there was a distinction in classification." Another graduate student recalled as a positive turning point the first time he saw his name on the department phone list. Similarly, another student identified as a positive turning point the appearance of his name in the class schedule.

Events signalling the affirmation of negative status classification or distinction were reported four times. One graduate student reported that the department chair wrote a letter to the graduate student indicating that she (the chair) was throwing a beginning-of-the-semester party at her home for all returning faculty. The chair requested the student to "serve" (distribute hors d'oeuvres and pour drinks) at the party and further clarified that if the graduate student acceded to the request that she would be expected to "show up promptly." This graduate student resented the department chair's throwing her weight around" and commented that she did not consider "ass-kissing" to be a privilege.

Another student reported feeling discouraged after meeting with the College Dean regarding a funding matter. He stated, "The underlying issue wasn't so much that funding wasn't approved; the underlying issue was how he treated me." The graduate student encountered the "professional wall" and had to cope with the Dean's explanation that since there were so few graduate students in the department that (in the big scheme of things) the undergraduates were more important. Other graduate students reported having to overcome "bureaucratic answers" and "being a peon in a monarch

department." In addition, several respondents used language such as "part-time slime," "lowly T.A.'s," or "sling-shot" (in contrast with the department chair's self-proclaimed title, "BIG GUN") to identify themselves. This terminology signals self-deprecating position awareness within the hierarchy of the university.

Category B: Structural Support and Cooperation

These turning points were events signalling to the graduate student that the administration demonstrates support or fails to demonstrate support via policies and procedures. Of the 43 turning points reported, 32 were positive and 11 were negative.

The most frequently reported event identified by graduate students as strengthening identification was being hired as a teaching assistant. In addition, many interviewees identified as supportive the process of meeting and establishing both an interpersonal and organizational relationship with the department secretaries, (e.g., receiving a mail box, office key, and obtaining access to the copy machine). The graduate students reported that these events were the first signs of acceptance and trust by the department.

Graduate students also reported that merely receiving information about the procedures necessary to fulfill as a student or as a teacher strengthened identification with their departments. As uncertainty was reduced, the graduate student felt more secure and consequently more satisfied with the way the system operated. In one instance, an interviewee expressed appreciation for her chair's having aided her in

disenrolling a particularly obnoxious student. This was a devastating experience for the beginning teacher but she overcame the unfortunate experience with the help of the department and reported feeling satisfied with the way the situation eventually turned out.

In contrast with the above, 11 turning points were reported as signalling distrust or dissatisfaction with administrative intervention. Receiving a teaching assistantship offer only verbally as opposed to a formal and written offer, and receiving the teaching contract three days after the semester had already begun were both interpreted as unprofessional.

Other graduate students reported receiving unclear, or no instructions at all, about formal procedures to successfully complete student-teacher responsibilities. One graduate student reported that he gave a final exam and:

> ...nobody (the department administration) knew about it... it could have been a sports trivia quiz and not one person from the department would have known about it. They didn't know what I was doing, and it didn't seem like they cared. To them I wasn't really a teacher, I was just someone to plug (into) a section.

This event, along with others, were described as demonstrating to the graduate student that the administration neither valued nor understood the student's need to have access to important procedural information.

Possibly the most interesting occurrence affecting graduate student morale was an event called "Bloody Monday." This event was identified by four graduate students as the most miserable event of the semester. Because of a high number of teaching assistants, and a reduction in the number of classes offered in the spring, most of the part-timers in the department were fired. Not only did the graduate students feel empathy for these teachers, but also felt guilty because they were the ones hired (at lower pay) to assume these teaching responsibilities.

Summary and Implications

The purpose of this study was to investigate the types of socialization experiences graduate student teachers encounter while pursuing masters studies, as these experiences can influence the graduate student's attraction to--or disaffection with--academe as a potential career. Data were collected by interviewing 29 graduate student teachers at a mid-sized west coast state university.

Content analysis was applied to the 172 turning point events. Three principal categories emerged: Intellectual Identity, Socio-Emotional Identity, and Occupational Identity. The categories were further div into several sub and sub-subcategories. The first category, Inte Identity, was divided into two subcategories: "Competence" and "Compatibility." The second category, Socio-Emotional Identity, divided into two subcategories: "Dyadic Interaction with Peer c Superordinate," and "Small Group Interaction," which was furthe into three sub-subcategories: "Socializing--Academic type," "

Non-Academic type," and "Disassociation." The final major category, Occupational Identity, was also divided into two subcategories: "Status Classification" and "Structural Support and Cooperation."

The results of this study revealed that graduate student teachers are able to identify and describe specific events (turning points) influencing identification with their departments.

Specific Findings

The large number of turning points (73) in the Intellectual Identity category indicate how vitally important it is for graduate students to feel intellectually competent and compatible with their departments. Primarily, graduate students rate their own level of intellectual competence against departmental standards, as communicated with them formally and informally by subordinates (students), peers (other graduate students), and superordinates (faculty and administrators).

As a beginning teacher, the graduate student feels competent when students demonstrate their having learned or express appreciation for the graduate students efforts. Of course, there are times when graduate students perform poorly in class, do not respond well to instruction, or question their teaching competence. In these instances, a graduate student --particularly a less experienced graduate student--calls into question his or her own competence as an instructor.

Graduate students should become aware of these types of teaching experiences so that they can anticipate and manage these types of difficulties, which in turn will increase positive identification with

their teaching roles. As a means of facilitating this awareness, departments might sponsor a variety of formal and informal meetings, including workshops, support groups, and social activities.

The results also indicate that feeling competent as a student strengthens identification with the department. As would be expected, formal evaluation of one's exams and papers significantly affect graduate students' feelings of intellectual competence. Graduate students also reported that their intellectual self-confidence increases when they were invited to participate in research projects and present their work at conferences. This indicates that one means of increasing identification lies in supporting research among graduate students, particularly that resulting in conference presentation and publication.

In addition to feeling competent, graduate students should feel that their intellectual interests are compatible with their departments'. Often, graduate students become disenchanted, not with graduate study per se, but rather with the particular ("narrow") intellectual foci embraced by one's department. Accordingly, one might forego further graduate study simply because of a lack of opportunity to pursue preferred intellectual interests. While no department can be all things for all graduate students, some effort might be made to at least acknowledge such discrepancies and respect divergent interests. This can be done through counseling, frequent discussions with mentors, visiting lecturers, and studies in other departments.

Events in the Socio-Emotional Identity category indicate the importance of supportive interpersonal relationships with peers and faculty. Peers primarily demonstrate their support by giving advice (e.g., clarifying an attendance policy) and sharing teaching experiences (e.g., describing experience with students complaining about low grades.) Through this guidance from peers, graduate student teachers are able to reduce some of the anxiety associated with their academic roles.

Additionally, graduate students reported that working with full-time faculty members along with other graduate students to establish common coursework and assignments strengthened feelings of acceptance and belonging. Of equal positive influence are informal social meetings.

While graduate students rely on peers and faculty for support, the findings in this study also show that in certain instances, graduate students passively or actively disassociate from their peers and superiors. This, of course, weakened identification with one's department, a finding previously reported by Bullis and Bach (1987).

All of the turning points in the Occupational Identity category are events related to organizational structure and climate. It is through the description of these events that graduate students signal an awareness of the system and their "place" in it. While positive affirmation of status strengthened graduate students' sense of membership, negative affirmation (sometimes self-assigned) weakened their feelings of acceptance. In addition to the specific situations with superordinates which signalled the graduate students' "low" status (e.g., asking a graduate student to "serve"

at a faculty party), graduate students also use neologisms to describe their status (e.g., "part-time slime," "peon," etc.) These metaphors indicate how little some graduate students feel they are valued by their departments.

One of the most important turning point types identified as strengthening occupational identity was receiving information from the department on how to successfully fulfill the department's required procedures (i.e., information about how and when to complete forms, construct exams, and submit grades). Because this information reduces uncertainty and strengthens identification, departments should frequently and clearly disseminate information about policies and standards for performance. For example, departments might distribute a timeline listing the dates by which certain requirements should be completed.

Departments can also assist graduate students in learning how to handle difficult students. One of the respondents in this study indicated how appreciative she was when the department chair assisted her in disenrolling a particularly obnoxious student. That assistance enabled the graduate student to think of herself as a valuable and appreciated member of the department. Accordingly, departments would be advised to instruct teaching assistants of the department's intention to support them in such instances.

Perhaps the events most seriously affecting occupational identity are the ones associated with economic security. As departments change and formalize employment decisions (e.g., not allowing graduate students to

teach at other institutions or eliminating part-time staff) graduate students become concerned about their economic security. Naturally, one's occupational identity is threatened as well.

Interestingly, only three events were identified as possibily affecting one's decision to pursue further graduate study, and all of these events pertained to economic security, and all were reported negative experiences. One event, while negatively affecting identification with the department, was reported as strengthening the student's resolve to pursue a Ph.D program. In each instance interviewees reported feeling threatened personally or having empathy for someone else whose economic security was threatened. The message is clear. If graduate students are to be encouraged to pursue academe as a career, then they must also be assured that they will have a livelihood to look forward to. They cannot, as was reported by interviewees in this study, be advised at the last moment of their having been awarded teaching assistantships or that they have been assigned teaching assistantships at the cost of firing part-timers. Further, when dire circumstances do occur making it necessary to terminate part-timers or hire teaching assistants at the last moment, then graduate students should be advised clearly of the reasons for these last-minute adjustments. Otherwise graduate students are left to infer the worst--namely, that academe is without economic security, that one never knows from one moment to the next whether their livelihood is secure.

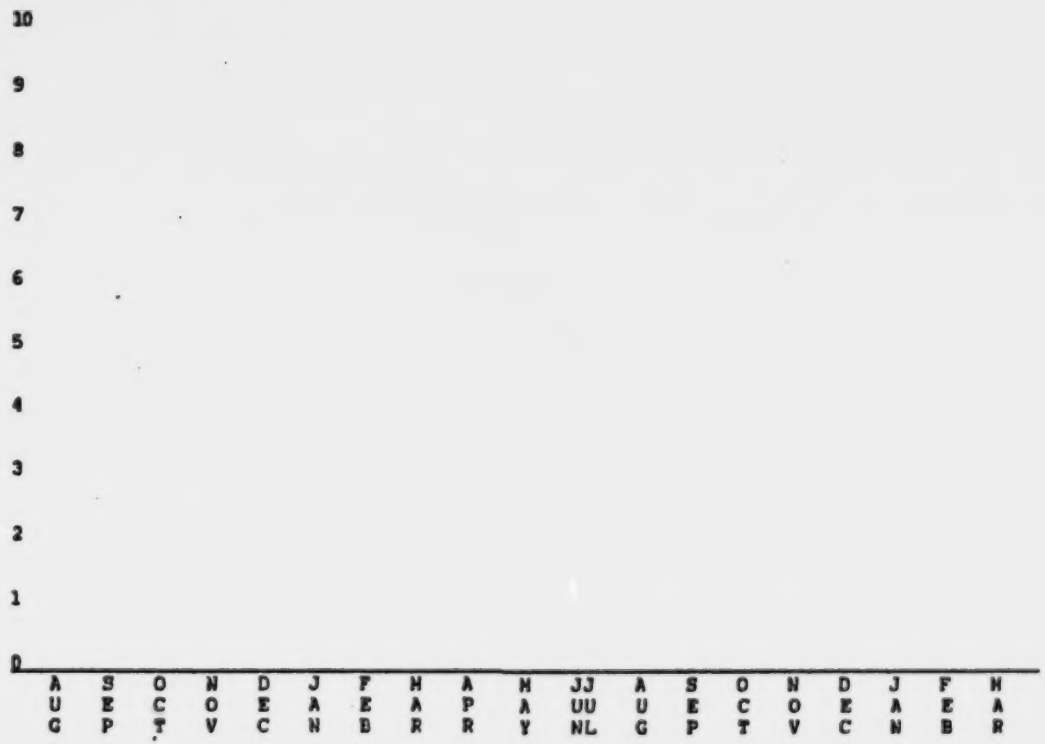
This study sought to determine whether Bullis and Bach's (1987) findings concerning factors affecting graduate student socialization could be replicated. The above findings and implications suggest that it is indeed fruitful to consider from graduate students' perspectives events affecting their socialization and identification with departments. In addition, these results have suggested a number of actions that might be taken to further graduate students' positive socialization and identification.

While this study's findings are limited to the one university from which the interviewees were drawn, they are nonetheless suggestive of recommendations that might be followed by other universities seeking to make more positive their socialization of graduate students. There are three reasons why positive socialization would have beneficial consequences: first, so that the graduate students themselves might derive more personal satisfaction from their jobs and achieve greater personal identification with their roles as teacher and student; second, so that their students might derive better instruction (the presumption being that positive socialization and identification is associated with improved teaching and graduate teacher-student contact); thirdly, that there is greater likelihood of filling professorial ranks with talented young academicians if we assist graduate students in finding meaningfulness and fulfillment during their initial careers as graduate students and teachers.

Identification With Department

IDENTIFICATION:

sense of Similarity, Belonging and Membership with department.



Appendix A

Socialization

Scale

10 = Complete and Total identification

5 = Moderate identification

0 = No identification

Participant #____

M or F

Age ____

Subject Matter:

American Student: Y N

27

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. I know that your time as a graduate student is valuable. I appreciate your help. I would like to assure you that all information will be strictly confidential, and that in no way will your name be identified. As such, may I have permission to tape this interview? (It's tough keeping notes and actively participating in the interview at the same time.)

I too am a graduate student teacher at this university and I am studying communication. Basically, I am trying to learn about the ways in which graduate students come to identify with or become socialized in their departments.

I would like to ask you some questions about your experiences as a graduate student here at the university . We will do this system-atically, using this graph. As you can see, it is separated into monthly intervals beginning with August and proceeding chronologically to May. On the left hand side is the level of identification, or sense of belonging, ranging from 0 (zero) to 10 (ten). Zero signifies absolutely no identification while ten signifies total and complete identification.

To begin, I'd like you to plot on the graph your present level of identification. Now I'd like you to think back to the first time you conceptualized yourself as a beginning graduate student. Please plot your original level of identification on the graph.

Tell me why your original level of identification was _____ .
Now what is the next turning point event which changed your level of identification either positively or negatively. Tell me how this event came about. Tell me how this event brought about change in your identification.

Can you think of the next event that either lowered or raised (weakened or strengthened) your sense of belonging or membership in the department. (This type of questioning continues until the participant identifies all significant turning points in his or her graduate student teaching career.)

Now, I'd like to ask you to draw a line connecting the turning points and indicate to me the nature of connections between them.

Please review the entire graph and make any changes that you consider appropriate.

Can you tell me if any of these turning points affect a future commitment to advanced graduate studies? If so, which one(s) and why?

Thank you for the interview. Good luck with your studies. Once again, I appreciate your help with my study.

Appendix C

Category System

I. Turning point events ENHANCING or THREATENING one's Intellectual Identity.

A. Intellectual Competence - situations, events, acts signalling to self one's intellectual competence.

A.1. Individual's Evaluation of Self as Teacher.

a. Feeling competent with one's ability as a teacher, by fulfilling responsibilities, realizing that students are performing and responding positively to instruction.

b. Feeling incompetent with one's ability as a teacher, wondering if possibly too young, or if really helping students to become better educated.

A.2. Individual's Evaluation of Self as Student.

a. Feeling competent with one's scholarly ability as a student (e.g., applying for and being accepted in a Ph.D. program, studying for, taking and passing qualifying exams, finding information regarding one's academic interests, determining thesis topic, attending and participating in professional conferences, receiving awards, fellowships, feeling confident with one's grades, classroom participation, and scholarly contribution).

b. Feeling incompetent with one's scholarly ability as a student, (e.g., performing poorly on papers, exams, or grades, thesis project not meeting one's expectations, finding theoretical concepts or course material too difficult or complex to understand).

A.3. Superordinates Intellectual Evaluation and Acknowledgment.

a. Superordinate gives confirming feedback about intellectual competence (e.g., giving advice about courses, project or research and possibilities, offering software or financial assistance for research, asking if interested in teaching position, asking if would proctor an exam, encouraging comments about teaching performance, or indicating to student that he/she is Ph.d material, and/or would like the student to take the professor's course).

b. Superordinate gives disconfirming feedback about intellectual competence (e.g., giving student lower than expected grade, overtly indicating to student that he/she is not able to handle a teaching position because too young, professor refusing to write letter of recommendation.

B. Intellectual Compatibility - situations, events, or acts signalling one's compatibility with the department's research agenda or intellectual objectives.

B.1. Students realizes that the department's intellectual objectives are Compatible with their Own (e.g., finding the coursework stimulating and challenging, "linking" intellectually with a professor in the department).

B.2. Student realizes that the department's intellectual objectives are INcompatible with their Own, usually motivating an individual to think about taking classes from other departments or leaving Chico State (e.g., department philosophy too narrow minded coursework not rigorous enough or too much so, not enjoying or interested in the coursework, failing to "link" with the department or professors).

II. Turning points events ENHANCING or THREATENING one's Socio-Emotional Identity.

A. Interpersonal Interactions - situations, events, or acts with peer, superordinate, or both signalling acceptance belonging and/or emotional support.

A.1. Dyadic Interaction with peer signalling presence or absence of support, camaraderie, acceptance.

a. Interaction with a peer a signalling presence of support or acceptance (e.g., receiving an offer to share work space, receiving advice about grading or dealing with problem students, helping with new language, peer covering a class receiving directions as to proceed in graduate program, or even just empathetic listening).

b. Interaction with a peer signalling an absence of support or acceptance (e.g., peer imposing conditional regard, study partner physically separating him or herself from the other, usually provoking feelings of isolation).

A.2. Dyadic Interaction with superordinate signalling a presence or absence of support and acceptance.

a. Interaction with professor, advisor, or other superordinate signalling a presence of support or acceptance (e.g., casual chit-chat).

b. Interaction with professor, advisor, or other superordinate signalling an absence of support or acceptance (e.g., major professor temporarily leaves the university for own academic pursuits, department chair does not indicate support student's decision to leave department for other interests).

A.3. Small Group Interaction with both superordinates and/or peers signalling a presence or absence of acceptance or belonging.

a. Socializing: Academic Type. Graduate students meet with thesis committee members, graduate student joins academic club, graduate students, part-time, and full-time faculty meet specifically to coordinate efforts in deciding common essay, common exams, or common lab assignments for the department.

b. Socializing: Non-Academic Type. Joining and interacting with a club, going to luncheons and outings, partying with other graduate students and professors, participating in departmental sporting activities.

c. Disassociation. The opposite of socializing in that the graduate student feels separated or chooses to sever connection from peers or professors due to differing academic interests, or in response to such things as an imposed conditional regard, or vicious gossip about professor or other graduate student(s).

III. Events transpiring and related to Organizational Structure and Climate affecting one's Occupational Identity.

A. Structural Support and Cooperation - situations, events, or acts signalling administrative support in terms of administrative intervention via policy and procedures.

A.1. Events signalling Trust and Satisfaction with administrative intervention, decisions or the manner in which the system operates (e.g., interviewing for and/or receiving assistantship in department, receiving formal permission to take class outside

department, receiving support by formally disenrolling intolerable and disruptive student from one's class, receiving information about how to proceed with graduate school, feeling worthy for one's representation at professional seminar or for one's contribution to interdepartment coordination efforts, receiving secretarial support).

A.2. Events signalling Dis-trust or Dis-satisfaction with administrative intervention, decisions, or the manner in which the system operates (e.g., structural decisions adversely affecting a peer or one's own economic and/or occupational security, receiving one's teaching assistantship offer verbally instead of a formal letter of acceptance, receiving unclear or no instructions about formal procedures to take in order to successfully complete student/teaching responsibilities).

B. Status Classification - situations, events, or acts signalling an individual's awareness of "fit," "place" or status in the organization.

B.1. Events signalling the affirmation of positive status classification or distinction (e.g., being invited as a "member" of the department to attend a Christmas party, seeing one's name in the class schedule).

B.2. Events signalling the affirmation of negative status classification or distinction (e.g., administrator giving bureaucratic answer, establishing and/or maintaining a professional wall, or administrator "throwing weight around").

IV. Other - Explain why the event does not match with a specific category.

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